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New CIA Director Offers Good Image

SKULKING in a trenchcoat is not to Adm. Stansfield Turner's liking and for that reason he is the best thing to happen to the Central Intelligence Agency in a long time.

This new director of the CIA has all the needed credentials. A graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, he was a Rhodes Scholar, headed the Naval War College, commanded the U.S. Second Fleet and served as a NATO naval chief.

But his most admirable trait is a desire to give the CIA the image it must have to carry out its mandate to catalogue intelligence vital to the security of this nation.

What Admiral Turner is seeking is the valued confidence of the American people. And he is pursuing that mission in the correct manner.

Unlike his predecessors, he is leveling with the American people without jeopardizing their security.

This new CIA director believes in declassifying information which will be of interest to the public. He correctly contends that excessive classification breeds disrespect for and abuse of all necessarily classified data.

Even so, Admiral Turner has

been displaying remarkable candor concerning the CIA's primary mandate. He doubts the CIA can abandon covert actions in carrying out assignments in this wholly dead-serious world.

And he is cognizant that every CIA officer takes an oath to defend the interests of this country even though this may mean a whole succession of deceptions.

The CIA has erred in the past, particularly with regard to investigations within this country, contrary to its congressional mandate.

It is unfortunate that some congressmen demand that the CIA operate in a goldfish bowl atmosphere. It cannot.

Both congressional and presidential oversight committees have been suggested for the CIA.

President Dwight Eisenhower once had such an advisory group to provide the White House with a broad view of the CIA's effectiveness. But Mr. Eisenhower stipulated the group was to be advisory, not supervisory. The CIA was established to aid the chief executive — and should continue to do so.

Admiral Turner is on the right track in making the CIA the reliable agency it was meant to be.